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Global Agricultural Information Network

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Original Designs Feature U.S. Hardwoods at Japan's Largest Furniture Show; AHEC Success Story Continues to Pay Dividends; Forest Products Summit Confronts Challenging Market Conditions; Texas Cattlemen Visit the United States' Largest Beef Export Market; U.S. Potato Board Holds Seminar in Tokyo; U.S. Soybean Buyers Conference Attracts over 350 Attendees; 5th Generation Oyster Firm Distributes U.S. Oysters; FAS/Japan Promotes the Future of Agricultural Extension

General Information:

The Wasabi

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Original Designs Feature U.S. Hardwoods at Japan's Largest Furniture Show: The American Hardwoods Export Council (AHEC) showcased unique furniture pieces created under a Marketing Access Program-sponsored project at the IFFT(formerly the International Furniture Fair Tokyo)/Interior Lifestyle Living show from November 26 - 28. The American Hardwood Furniture Design Project brought together ten top Japanese designers, woodworking companies, and skilled craftsmen from the Shizuoka Prefecture. Agricultural Trade Office Director Rachel

Nelson delivered remarks at an AHEC-sponsored reception on Thanksgiving Day. AHEC used the IFFT show to promote the fine quality and sustainability of U.S. hardwoods, as demonstrated by the recently developed American Hardwood Environmental Profile (AHEP), which provides a full life-cycle environmental assessment for each export shipment of U.S. hardwoods. IFFT is Japan's premiere showcase for interior furniture, much of which utilizes U.S. hardwoods.



AHEC Success Story Continues to Pay Dividends: On November 20, the U.S. Embassy Tokyo's Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino and Agricultural Specialist Yuichi Hayashi visited Doi Furniture in Fuchu City, Hiroshima Prefecture. Doi Furniture is a 4th Generation family company that has been crafting high-quality furniture in for more than 60 years. Following participation in AHEC's Ki to Ki (Wood and Wood) promotional design campaign,



Fuchu
2007
Doi



markets.

Furniture has made a successful evolution into producing stylish furniture that beautifully marries modern design, traditional Japanese craftsmanship and gorgeous U.S. hardwoods. As part of the more than \$70 million dollar Japanese market for U.S. hardwood products, Doi Furniture is another example of the long-lasting value of Market Access Program-funded market development activities in overseas

Forest Products Summit Confronts Challenging Market Conditions: Japan has long been a major export market for U.S. softwood logs, lumber and forest products. This longstanding and



critically important relationship is especially evident during the annual December meeting, which draws major U.S. lumber exporters as well as delegations from the Japan Home Builders Association and the Japan Lumber Importers Association in order to share information on market conditions, address trade constraints, and collaborate for the future prosperity of all participants. The U.S. Embassy Tokyo's Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino provided an overview of the Japanese political and economic outlook, which is particularly interesting now as Japan heads to the polls for an unexpected snap-election on December 14 amid an economy that has slipped into recession for the 5th time since 2000.

Japanese and U.S. delegates alike were disappointed that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe postponed an increase in the national consumption tax from October 2015 to April 2017 as this move (while perhaps better for the overall Japanese economy) has snuffed any hopes for a pre-tax hike surge in home construction and sales in 2015. The consensus is that total housing starts in Japan in 2014 will be below 900,000 for the fourth time in five years; the housing industry considers one million housing starts to be a healthy market.

Texas Cattlemen Visit the United States' Largest Beef Export Market:

On December 2, the Office of Agricultural Affairs hosted a team of cattle ranchers and feedlot operators from the great state of Texas, the third largest beef producing state in the Union. With cattle and calves accounting for over \$10.5 billion of farm receipts in Texas in 2012 (the highest value commodity in all of Texas), beef exports generated more than \$850 million of exports in 2012. After losing its long-held title of U.S. beef's top export market in 2004, Japan once again became the most important market for U.S. cattlemen in 2013, buying nearly \$1.3 billion of U.S. beef last year. Routine visits by U.S. ranchers and feedlot operators remain critically important to servicing the Japanese market, underscoring the value of the relationship and the United States' commitment to providing a safe and reliable supply of high-quality beef. Nothing says "we care" like suits, boots, and a big 'ol cowboy hat.



U.S. Potato Board Holds Tokyo Seminar: Agricultural Trade Office Japan Director Rachel Nelson provided remarks on November 19 at the U.S. Potato Board (USPB) Seminar for Japanese importers and food service industry representatives. The seminar provided a variety of interesting new recipes from around the world that used potatoes as a main ingredient, including potato nachos, black sesame potato soup, potato pot pies, and potato turnovers. Participants had the opportunity to sample all of the recipes, and to hear from a local retailer that opened a very successful new restaurant featuring a unique kind of gourmet mashed potatoes called "potato cream". Additionally, a U.S. potato grower presented an update on the status of U.S. potato production and an overview of his farm operation in North Dakota.



U. S. Soybean Buyers Conference Attracts over 350

Attendees: On November 17 and 18, the U. S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) held its 30th Annual Soybean Outlook Conference at the Tokyo



American Club. The U.S. Soybean Export Council has operated an office in Japan since 1956, a physical symbol of the long and enduring relationship between both trading partners. Covering food, oil, and feed industry dynamics, the conference included a soy food mini-trade show as well as a press conference to discuss health benefits of soy and the quality of the 2013/14 U.S. soybean crop. The U.S. Embassy, Tokyo's Senior Agricultural Attaché Elizabeth Autry and Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino supported the two-day event with speeches highlighting the importance of the Japanese market for U.S. soybean farmers. Of particular note was the projection that at 107 million metric tons, this fall's soybean crop will blow the doors off of 2013's record production level. Japanese soy food industry players also welcomed the news that U.S. non-GMO soybean production is trending upward on increased acreage and greater yielding varieties.

5th Generation Oyster Firm Distributes U.S. Oysters: On November 21, the U.S. Embassy Tokyo's Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino and Agricultural Specialist Yuichi Hayashi visited Kanawa Suisan, a family company that has been raising oysters in Hiroshima Bay since the 19th Century. Hiroshima is the largest oyster producing prefecture in Japan, producing nearly 60 percent of the total national volume. In addition to raising premium quality Japanese oysters (mostly *crassostrea gigas* and *crassostrea nippona*), Kanawa Suisan is the sole distributor in Japan for U.S. oysters from Washington State-



-based Taylor Shellfish. Live U.S. oysters are flown to Japan and given time to recover their strength before being served up on the half shell. Nearly all U.S. oysters and about 10 percent of Kanawa's production are served raw on the half-shell in Japan, where prices per piece range between 400 – 800 yen (\$3.33 - \$6.66). Nearly all of these fresh raw oysters are eaten in Tokyo-area restaurants, including oyster bars and steak houses also serving premium, dry-aged U.S. beef. Kanawa Suisan sells nearly 90 percent of its total production in the Tokyo metropolitan area (mostly as shucked raw oysters packed in sea water) through high-end

food shops in Tokyo's famous department stores. U.S. exports of oysters to Japan were worth nearly \$500,000 in 2013.

FAS/Japan Promotes the Future of Agricultural Extension: On November 22, the U.S. Embassy, Tokyo's Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino delivered a keynote address at the Saijyo Agricultural High School in Saijyo City, Hiroshima Prefecture. Speaking about the importance of agricultural extension in translating scientific innovations from the classroom to the farm, Mangino exhorted more than 1,000 Saijyo students to carry their passion for agriculture into their professional lives and help Japan realize its agricultural potential. Saijyo is currently one of only 204 Super Science High Schools designated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), Saijyo has the distinction of being the first agricultural high school in Japan to earn this prestigious recognition of its commitment to agricultural sciences and engineering.



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